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SAN DIEGO MOTEL IS ORDERED TO STOP

ILLEGAL ACTIVITY ON ITS PREMISES

San Diego's Drug Abatement Response Team Obtains Temporary Restraining Order Against La Cresta Motel

San Diego, CA (October 9, 1998) -- The owners of a San Diego motel must take immediate action to abate any illegal activities, including narcotics and prostitution violations, that occur on the motel's premises. That was the ruling today by San Diego Superior Court Judge Raymond F. Zvetina in a drug and prostitution abatement case brought against the owners of the La Cresta Motel by the City Attorney's Office, as part of the City of San Diego's Drug Abatement Response Team (DART).

Judge Zvetina issued a temporary restraining order against defendants, Shirish Kothari, Mrudula Kothari, Deval Patel, and Mahendra Patel, the owners and operators of La Cresta Motel at 4980 El Cajon Boulevard. The order states that the defendants must immediately take steps to maintain their property in compliance with California's drug abatement, red light abatement, public nuisance, and unfair business practices laws. The defendants were ordered not to rent motel rooms to known drug users, dealers, prostitutes, pimps, and anyone else involved in illegal drug activity and prostitution.

In an investigation from June 1998 to September 1998, San Diego Police officers found evidence that the La Cresta Motel was the site of blatant illegal drug activity and acts of prostitution. Police have made numerous arrests at the motel for narcotics violations and contacts for prostitution activity.

California law, specifically the Red Light Abatement, Drug Abatement, and Unfair Business Practices Acts, makes property owners civilly responsible for illegal drug activities and unlawful business practices conducted on their premises.

"These civil abatement provisions give law enforcement a powerful tool to combat illegal activities occurring in our neighborhoods," said City Attorney Casey Gwinn. "Our civil abatement prosecutors, working closely with the San Diego Police Department and Neighborhood Code Compliance, ensure that prostitution and drug activity in our communities will not be tolerated. This illegal activity leads to the deterioration of our neighborhoods, and there are consequences for those property owners who allow this activity to continue."

The City of San Diego's Drug Abatement Response Team (DART) is composed of deputy city attorneys, members of the San Diego Police Department, and an inspector from Neighborhood Code Compliance.

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